

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an irresponsible Republican bill that will soon come to this Floor. This measure is an attack on those who are unemployed at when they need the most assistance. I am not alone in my outrage, I am joined by Members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, to call attention to this repeated attack on workers in this country who find themselves without a job at this time.

When the Great Depression was upon us Congress did not put forth education requirements in order for unemployed men and women to get potential future jobs, Congress along with the President worked together to create jobs. It is my hope that this Congress will work together with the President to put Americans back to work.

This bill proposed by my Republican colleagues is the latest chapter in the Republican scheme to sabotage our recovery. It is a known fact that when Americans have more money in their pockets, they spend it which enhances our economy. When Americans have more money in their pockets then small businesses can hire more workers which creates more American jobs. Unemployment Insurance pays for itself.

Last December, Republicans threatened to terminate the last bit of income received by over one million unemployed Americans by refusing to extend unemployment benefits. Now that our economy is on the road to recovery, Washington Republicans, once again, aim to take money out of the pockets of working Americans. Slashing unemployment benefits would cut off a lifeline that more than 1 million Americans depend on to put food on their tables.

This latest Republican scheme would hit hardest states with the most Americans looking for work. They intend to cut the length of unemployment benefits from 73 weeks to 33 weeks in 22 states.

Under the Republican plan more than 194,000 Texans would lose their Unemployment benefits. Even with the recent good news on job creation, long-term unemployment remains at near record levels.

This is primarily because our economy still has 5.5 million fewer jobs than before the recession, which makes returning to work particularly difficult right now. Rather than acknowledge these facts, Republicans in Congress seem intent on blaming the unemployed for their unemployment.

The Republican proposal on unemployment insurance would result in 40 fewer weeks being provided to many long-term unemployed workers, reducing benefits to nearly 3 million workers compared to an extension of current law.

The draconian cut in the Republican bill is squarely focused on the States with the high-

est rates on unemployment—the same places where finding a new job is the hardest. Consider this fact: under the GOP bill, a worker in the State with the highest level of unemployment would lose nearly three times as many weeks of benefits as a worker in the State with the lowest unemployment.

In addition to drastically cutting Federal unemployment benefits, the House bill proposes a series of new barriers to unemployment benefits that would reduce access to UI for years to come. Many of these provisions are changes to permanent law, not to the temporary federal programs that were established in response to the worst recession since the great depression.

STATE WAIVER OPTION

Creating new barriers to unemployment insurance is not reform. Instead, it amounts to breaking the promise made nearly 80 years ago to help Americans struggling to find a new job. The House Republican bill would allow States to divert UI funds for other purposes if they get a waiver. This waiver authority could lead to jobless Americans being denied unemployment benefits, or to new roadblocks that hinder access to benefits.

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA REQUIREMENT

Another very disturbing feature of the House Republican bill is a provision that would require Unemployment Insurance (UI) recipients to have a high school degree or to be working toward one to be eligible for benefits. This means a fifty year old worker who has worked his or her entire life would have to go back to high school to get unemployment benefits. And you might ask who will pay for hundreds of thousands of people to get their GED. The Republican bill has no answer, even when we already have an estimated 160,000 people on waiting lists for adult education classes.

DRUG TESTING REQUIREMENT

A third objectionable provision in the Republican bill would allow States to subject all applicants for UI to drug tests. This provision seems part of a larger agenda to stigmatize unemployment insurance by suggesting that Americans are jobless because of their own failings, rather than because our economy still has over five million fewer jobs than when the recession started.

States already deny benefits to any individual who has been fired from their job because of a substance abuse problem, and States can disqualify a UI recipient if he or she is unwilling to take a drug test if required by a prospective employer.

We don't need to further target unemployment insurance recipients with drug tests. Congress should avoid policies like these that seek to blame the unemployed for unemployment, and instead work on commonsense policies that promote reemployment.

COMMENDATION OF DARRON MCKINNEY

HON. HANSEN CLARKE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Darron McKinney as a law enforcement officer and role model in Detroit, Michigan.

Officer McKinney caught the nation's attention when he gave a riveting performance of his original song, "A Call to Courage," at the National Law Enforcement Officers memorial candlelight vigil on May 13, 2001 in Washington D.C. The song pays tribute to slain police officers and their families.

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the song became a symbol of American bravery and unity, and is now considered a tribute to the first responders who served in the 9/11 recovery efforts. Many local and national TV stations broadcast the footage of Officer McKinney's performance, and the performance is regularly televised on the Pentagon Network.

Ten years after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Officer McKinney's song reminds us of the love and appreciation we have for our first responders and members of our military. When disaster strikes, first responders like Officer McKinney help keep our families, neighborhoods, and communities safe.

"A Call to Courage" is a fitting tribute to our men and women in uniform. It is with great honor that I recognize Officer McKinney's contributions.

A CALL TO COURAGE

Officer Darron McKinney

Life, the chance to live, the chance to learn, the chance to teach, the chance to give, test you made a choice, you took a stand, you took the oath, you found your voice.

You made the sacrifice, then you took God's advice, you heard your call to courage.

Shield the public trust, protecting lives, respect and pride to serve and honor. Faith, your trust in God, that special path, you must be brave to guard our freedom.

When your life's on the line, in your heart and your mind you have a call to courage.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICK MULVANEY

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 40, I was unavoidably detained questioning witnesses at the Joint Economic Committee hearing entitled "Bolstering the Economy: Helping American Families by Reauthorizing the Payroll Tax Cut and UI Benefits." Had I been present, I would have voted, "no."

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.